

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed June 29, 2007, has been received and its contents carefully noted. The pending claims, claims 1-4, were rejected. By this Response, claims 1-4 have been amended. Support may be found in the specification and the claims as originally filed. Specific support may be found on page 15, lines 4-12, page 20, lines 3-16 and page 20, line 17 to page 22, line 9, and page 22, line 20 to page 26, line 8 of the specification as originally filed. No statutory new matter has been added. Therefore, reconsideration and entry of the claims as amended are respectfully requested.

The Claimed Invention

As set forth in claims 1-3, the present invention requires (1) a document top side setting section (which corresponds to keys 242 and 243 as described in Applicants' exemplary embodiment in the specification) which accepts an operator's input designating a position of the top side of the document, (2) a document direction judging section arranged to determine a direction of the document, (3) a layout determination section which determines a layout of the document image and a writing space on a paper sheet based on the operator's input accepted by the document top side setting section, and based on the direction of the document judged by the document direction judging section, and (4) an image forming section that performs the printing operation in accordance with a layout determined by the layout determination section.

As set forth in claim 4, the present invention requires an image forming section having means which does not place a separating line at the boundary between two adjacent sub-areas that are blank.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown (US 20040095587). Specifically, the Examiner deemed that it would have been obvious

to have set a mode called a writing mode to make it convenient for a user by making the writing space copying mode a quick mode for the production of a sheet with a predetermined layout.

Applicants respectfully submit that Brown discloses an image communication and printing device that is arranged to print at least two reduced-size images laid out together onto a single sheet of paper. However, Brown fails to disclose printing a document image on a half of a single paper sheet while the other half of the paper sheet is left as a writing space for the user's comment. Brown also fails to disclose or suggest a layout determination section, as recited in amended claim 1, that is arranged to determine a layout of the document image and the writing space on a paper sheet, based on the operator's designation of a position of the document top side, and the direction of the document. Brown further fails to disclose an image forming section that performs the printing operation in accordance with the layout thus determined. Therefore, Brown does not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

The Examiner rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of Microsoft PowerPoint, in particular <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/HA010348091033.aspx>. Specifically, the Examiner deemed that it would have been obvious to have allowed the printing of lines on a page for user comments.

Applicants respectfully submit that the PowerPoint fails to disclose the document top side setting section, the document direction judging section, and the layout determination section as set forth in claim 1, as amended. The PowerPoint then also naturally fails to disclose Applicants' image forming section that performs printing operations in accordance with the layout determined by the layout determination section. Therefore, the asserted PowerPoint does not alleviate the deficiencies of Brown. Hence, Brown and the PowerPoint, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

Since none of the cited prior art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests (1) a document top side setting section, (2) a document direction judging section, (3) a layout determination section, and (4) an image forming section in accordance with the present

invention, the claimed invention is novel and unobvious. Therefore the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should properly be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of Nakagiri (US 6,501,562). Specifically, the Examiner deemed that it would have been obvious to have determined where blank pages are to be and to not draw separator lines between them in order to allow the pages to be printed properly.

Applicants note Nakagiri's explanation "when the number of logical pages cannot be perfectly divided by N of N-up, by inserting the blank logical pages onto the first physical page, the combination of the logical pages which are arranged onto the physical page is matched to that in case of the normal order". See column 9, line 67 to column 10, line 3. However, in Applicants' view, Nakagiri fails to disclose or suggest "means for judging for each pair of two adjacent sub-areas of the printing area of a paper sheet whether or not both adjacent sub-areas of each pair result in a blank portion", and "means arranged not to put a separating line at the boundary between the two adjacent sub-areas when the judging means has judged that these two adjacent sub-areas result in a blank portion." Nowhere do Brown and Nakagiri teach or suggest both including a separating line at each boundary between adjacent document images consolidatedly assembled on a single paper sheet, and prohibiting the formation of such a separating line at the boundary if the boundary is between two adjacent sub-areas that are blank.

Since Brown and Nakagiri do not teach or suggest an image forming section having means which actively precludes any separating line at a boundary between two adjacent blank sub-areas, the claimed invention is novel and unobvious. Therefore, Applicants respectfully urge that the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) also should properly be withdrawn.

Request for Interview


Applicants respectfully request either a telephonic or an in-person interview should there be any remaining issues.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a), and any fees required therefor are hereby authorized to be charged to **Deposit Account No. 02-4300, Attorney Docket No. 032739M085.**

Respectfully submitted,
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